Ex-Cult Official Claims 'Hit List' Included Stennis And Goldwater

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Terri Buford, once a top administrator of the People's Temple, claimed Thursday that Sens. Barry Goldwater and John Stennis were on a "hit list" maintained by the cult.

The 26-year-old People's Temple defector also charged that former People's Temple attorney Tim Stoen masterminded illegal activities of the cult.

She said she made the accusations to a federal grand jury earlier this week.

Stennis (D-Miss.) said he knew nothing about the cult or its leaders and could think of no reason why he would be included on an assassination list.

An aide to Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said, "It's the first time I've heard of it."

The existence of a "hit list" has been rumored before, with such names as former President Richard Nixon and former California Gov. Ronald Reagan said to be on it.

Ms. Buford said California Atty. Gen. Evelle Younger and U.S. Atty. William Hunter were also slated for assassination if anything happened to Rev. Jim Jones, the cult's leader who died with more than 900 followers in a mass murder-suicide at Jonestown, Guyana.

She identified the person in charge of the list as Sandra L. Bradshaw, 32, a People's Temple member in San Francisco.

Stoen and Ms. Bradshaw were not available for comment.

Terri Buford

(Ms. Buford has lived at 1177 Central, the home of Memphis writer Mark Lane, periodically since the mass murder-suicide in Guyana Nov. 18.)

According to Ms. Buford, Jones instructed an assassination squad "to kill as many people as they could until they were killed themselves or took their own lives."

None of the people on the purported "hit list" was killed.

Ms. Buford told reporters that "every illegal act, every plan for violence was either initiated or approved by Stoen." Stoen joined the temple in 1969 and was a high-ranking member before leaving the sect in 1977 after squabbling with Jones in a custody battle over Stoen's son. Jones said he had fathered the child with Stoen's wife, Grace. The child — John Victor Stoen — died in Jonestown.

Ms. Buford said Stoen, who worked in the San Francisco district attorney's office, used his position to quash a 1976 investigation of the People's Temple in connection with alleged voter fraud.

(Lane, Ms. Buford's attorney, told reporters she made the same charges Wednesday before a federal grand jury investigating the sect and the assassination of Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.).)

Ryan was slain along with three newsmen and a cult member who was returning to the United States with Ryan's party. The five were gunned down Nov. 18 while leaving the People's Temple camp at Jonestown. The cult's mass murder-suicide followed within hours.

Ms. Buford has been subpenaed to appear Jan. 17 before a county grand jury investigating the People's Temple in connection with the murder-suicide and voter fraud charges here. Lane was subpenaed to appear Jan. 24.

Ms. Buford said attorney Charles Garry, who took over as the cult's attorney after Stoen left, was aware of arms shipments to Guyana and of plans for a mass suicide.

"The news media has published a good deal of false information about me," she added. "I am not a cold-blooded killer. I am not a weapons expert. I was not the mistress of Jim Jones. I was not a member of the hit squad."

The Pentagon said Thursday the government's costs for evacuating bodies from the Jonestown massacre and keeping them in a mortuary in Delaware may reach $4 million. Spokesmen said more than $3.5 million has been spent so far on the military operation.

Rep. Thomas Evans (R-Del.) said 676 bodies still lie unclaimed at Dover Air Force Base and people in his state want to be rid of them.